

## The daybook defense: how reflection fosters the identity work of readers and writers

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### **Abstract:**

Classrooms play a large part in shaping youths' identities as readers and writers. Due to the pressures of high-stakes exams, for example, reading and writing identities are often defined by a set of academic skills that students can or cannot perform. Such rigid concepts of readers and writers often cause secondary students to believe that their literacy abilities are fixed (i.e., as struggling readers). This study explores how reflective conversations through a daybook defense (an oral reflective assessment for a writer's notebook) opened opportunities for students to redefine what it meant to read and write in two English language arts classrooms. Findings suggest that reflections opened opportunities for students to articulate behaviors of reader/writer identities and express beliefs about reader/writer identities. Implications suggest that such reflective opportunities can provide spaces for students to rewrite reader/writer identities in the classroom.

**Keywords:** Identity | Writing | Literature | Instructional strategies | Instructional methods and materials

### **Article:**

Reflective conversations through a daybook defense (an oral assessment for a writer's notebook) opened opportunities for students to redefine what it meant to read and write in two English language arts classrooms.

In *Crossing Boundaries: Teaching and Learning With Urban Youth*, Kinloch (2012) described a moment in her high school English classroom when a group of her students passionately debated whether they were writers. Even after writing and reading aloud his poem, one student asserted, "I'm not [a writer]. Putting words on paper don't make me a writer." His classmate disagreed by saying, "Why you afraid to be called a writer?...I'm a writer. I use words to express emotions."

For us (current and former high school English teachers), this debate was powerful because young writers discussed what it means to be a writer on their own terms. As a result, students had the opportunity to create relevant literacy-learning experiences for themselves. We believe this kind of reflective discussion is an important, but often ignored, practice that opens spaces for students to identify as readers and writers in new ways. Thus, the purpose of this article is to illustrate how two high school English teachers used reflection to foster the identity work of readers and writers. By *identity work*, we mean opportunities for students to situate themselves as readers and writers, both in and outside the classroom.

Educators know that deliberate self-reflection on experiences is one of the most important learning processes that teachers can model for students (Schön, 1983). For us, reflection involves connecting experiences to past learning, synthesizing and evaluating data, and applying concepts to events outside of the classroom (Costa & Kallick, 2000), which are all required by the Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). Self-reflection, then, means sifting through where the class has been and attempting to make sense of it. In the end, students benefit from self-assessing work, dispositions, and goals because they can create meaningful learning experiences for themselves. Such reflection can be done individually or with others and is more successful when facilitated by teachers with a purposeful structure.

Exploring how self-reflection shapes students' identity work, however, has been less explored in literacy research. Thus, we decided to take a closer look at how a specific literacy practice, the daybook defense (an oral reflective assessment of a reader/writer notebook), fostered opportunities for reader/writer identity work in two high school English classrooms. The two teachers in the study used a daybook (Brannon et al., 2008), similar to a writer's notebook (Fletcher & Portalupi, 2005), to engage students in literacy learning through reader responses, write-to-learn activities, and authoring various genres. By focusing on the daybook defense, we hope to provide a tangible way for practitioners to use reflective discussions to foster opportunities for students to situate themselves as readers and writers. To do that, we provide a review of scholarship related to literacy practices, identity work, and reflection, followed by a discussion of our research methods and findings.

### **Literacy Practices and Identity Work**

Educational researchers have recognized that learning is an identity process in which students learn to take on particular behaviors and discourses associated with what they are learning (Wenger, 1998). Identities, or "self-understandings," are the ways in which people "tell themselves and then try to act as though they are who they say they are" (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998, p. 3). They are also fluid and multidimensional and are constructed in dynamic and interrelated ways (Butler, 1990; Holland & Leander, 2004). For example, students might position themselves as a writer one day and a nonwriter the next, depending on the lesson of the day. However, it is through moment-to-moment interactions that identities are accumulated over time and sedimented by habitual positionings (Holland et al., 1998). In other words, students come to solidify identities in practice through continual interactions with meaning-making events (Rowse & Pahl, 2007; Wortham, 2004). For example, a student who

consistently reads and discusses nonfiction texts throughout a semester is likely to become known as an avid reader of nonfiction within the classroom.

Schools and classrooms play a large part in shaping, even solidifying, youths' identities as readers and writers based on instructional practices (Broughton & Fairbanks, 2003; Hall, 2012). Wortham (2004) portrayed how positionings by the teacher and classmates solidified a student's identity as disruptive outcast (i.e., talked off-topic) because she did not fit into the "good student" identity that the teacher expected. This research relates to the argument that "acceptable" literacy identities are limited by schools' emphasis on particular kinds of reading and writing skills based on standards, often dismissing the variety of literacy practices that occur outside of school (Hall, 2012). In contrast, Vetter (2010) found that a high school English teacher improvised responses to situate her students as readers within literacy events over time. Specifically, the teacher often built on students' comments, made connections to current events (i.e., pop culture), and facilitated nontraditional practices (i.e., a poetry slam) to open opportunities for students to engage in a broader notion of what it means to be a reader in school. Thus, occasions for identity work can be optimized when educators connect literacy practices to students' past experiences, to who they are, and to who they might become in the future (Alvermann, Moon, & Hagood, 1999).

One way to open those occasions is through narrative self-reflection, which can illuminate beliefs about identities and provide a storyline for what it means to take on or resist identity positions (Davies & Harré, 1999; Holland et al., 1998). In these reflective moments of construction, for example, students have the opportunity to gain a better understanding of how and why they position themselves as specific kinds of readers and writers. For example, a student might successfully write a blog at home but struggle to write a literary analysis at school, leaving the student to wonder if he or she is a writer. Self-reflection about the construction and enactment of reader and writer identities over time can help students sort through those voices to recognize the kinds of positions that they have taken up and resisted and potentially think about positions that they plan to take on in the future. In addition, students' ideologies about what it means to be a reader or writer become explicit, which helps them either develop or change storylines about those identities.

A significant amount of research has illustrated the complex, dynamic, and intersectional nature of students' identity work in relation to literacy (Blackburn, 2002; Moje, 2000; Wortham, 2004). Despite this research, students are rarely provided with opportunities to talk about identity work in relation to literacy (e.g., dialogue about how and why they read and write; Bickerstaff, 2012; Broughton & Fairbanks, 2003; Muhammad, 2012). Perhaps this is due to lack of research illustrating practical ways in which educators can open those opportunities in classrooms.

To address that need, we became interested in learning more about how to provide occasions for high school English students to situate themselves as readers and writers in the classroom. For us, a reader/writer identity refers to how capable students believe they are in reading or writing concepts, how valuable reading and writing is to them, and how they perceive the behaviors and discourses of readers/writers in various contexts (Hall, 2012; Hall, Johnson, Juzwik, Wortham, & Mosley, 2010). Rather than examining students' identity work over time in classrooms, we chose to explore how students engaged in identity work during a specific literacy practice: the daybook

defense. We focused our research on this practice because we wanted to learn more about how reflective talk shapes students' positionings as readers and writers. It is our hope that this research will provide one way (i.e., the daybook defense) for teachers to foster identity work in their classrooms. This is especially important for some secondary students who enter school believing that their literacy abilities are fixed (i.e., as struggling readers or nonwriters). Such identity work could open opportunities for students to take ownership and likely become "actors in a story, rather than passive watchers or listeners of someone else's experience" (Moje, 2000, p. 680).

## **The Teachers and Their Classrooms**

This study took place in two Southeastern U.S. high school English classrooms. At the time of this study, Rigby High School (the school where Adrienne, the fourth author, taught; all student and school names are pseudonyms) had 1,410 students in grades 9–12. According to state standards, 46% of the students at this school were considered proficient in math and/or reading. Forty-one percent of the students were white, 37% were African American, 10% were Asian, 7% were Hispanic, and 4% were multiracial. Forty-five percent of students received free or reduced-price lunch.

Coley's (fifth author) school, Roosevelt High School, had 1,090 students in grades 9–12. According to state standards, 40% of the students at this school were considered proficient in math and/or reading. Eighty-three percent of the students were white, 9% were African American, 4% were Hispanic, and 3% were multiracial. Thirty-four percent received free or reduced-price lunch. Students in this article were in college-preparatory (on-level) and honors English classes and identified as readers and writers in various ways. The students highlighted in this article gave written consent to participate in the study. We also obtained parental consent because all students were under the age of 18.

Both teachers were graduates of the Secondary English Program at the university where Amy and Jeanie (first and third authors) teach. In classes with Amy and Jeanie, the teachers had learned about and used daybooks, and both decided to integrate daybooks into their classrooms. After graduation, Adrienne and Coley remained involved with the university by being guest speakers and cooperating teachers.

## **Daybooks**

Adrienne and Coley both described daybooks as being akin to a kitchen junk drawer, in which students put all of their writings, including favorite quotes and everyday rants. Taken from Brannon et al.'s (2008) concept of daybooks, Adrienne and Coley used them as "thinking tools" for students "to research and think about their worlds" (p. 2). This concept connects to Murray's (1986) notion of daybooks, the term he used for his writing notebooks, in which he suggested making "lists, notes, diagrams, etc." (p. 148) in a notebook so writing is seen as something that can be done in short snippets of time rather than large chunks of time. In addition, the daybook stems from the common notion of a writing notebook, "where a writer can engage in the fun, often messy job of being a writer—practicing, listening, playing with language, gathering images and insights and ideas" (Fletcher & Portalupi, 2005, p. 4).

For instruction, Adrienne and Coley used the daybook every day to engage students in reader response, authoring various genres, and writing to learn. For reader responses, students were asked to engage in a variety of writings to help them better understand a text, such as writing a letter from a character's point of view. For authorship, students were asked to write a variety of texts, including drafts of poems and essays. When students wrote to learn, they engaged in writing that helped them better understand a concept. This might be in the form of a graphic organizer to break down information about the 1920s before reading *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Daybooks, then, were used as thinking tools that fostered students' reflections and research about themselves and the world around them in relation to texts. As a compilation of all musings, the notebooks were not graded for grammar, reading comprehension, or completion. Instead, they were assessed as documents of students' reflective process of reading and writing (Brannon et al., 2008). Thus, during a unit of study, students were using their daybooks every day as a tool to record their reading and writing practices. This provided a wealth of information for students to draw on during their defense (described in the next section).

### **Assessing a Daybook**

To assess the daybooks, Adrienne and Coley asked students to engage in two processes: daybook annotations and daybook defenses. Both occurred at the end of a unit and/or grading period as a way of reflecting about what students learned as readers/writers. To annotate, they asked students to find separate entries in their daybooks that illustrated their growth as a reader and writer. Students also chose two other entries: one that they liked and one that illustrated an aha moment (see Figure 1). On a 4-inch × 6-inch sticky note, Adrienne and Coley asked students to write down specific reflections for each annotation, such as the learning that took place in that piece of evidence (see Figure 1). Such annotations were expected to illustrate what they had learned and the progress they had made over time.

#### **How Should I Prepare for the Daybook Defense?**

At the end of the unit, you will complete an oral daybook defense about the following:

- Growth as a writer
- Growth as a reader
- Growth as a thinker
- An aha moment
- One entry that you like and explain what you like about it

For each bullet, you will reference ONE page of your daybook as evidence. You should indicate this page by tagging it with a sticky note.

On that 4-inch x 6-inch sticky note, please write the following:

- Explain in detail what you were doing on the page. Pretend we (teacher and classmates) know nothing about our class and what we were doing.
- What learning was taking place?
- In what ways does the entry illustrate growth as a learner?
- If you could modify this lesson in any way, what would you do?

**Figure 1.** Daybook Assessment

Once students annotated those five entries, Adrienne and Coley asked them to engage in an oral daybook defense, defined as a reflective assessment in which students defended the idea that they were using their daybooks as thinking tools (Brannon et al., 2008). Students came to class prepared to share their written annotations. Before the reflective discussion began, the teachers reviewed the conversational guidelines (see Figure 2). Students sat in a circle. Because their classes were typically large (25–30 students), Adrienne or Coley had student names written on Popsicle sticks. They randomly chose five names to discuss the first annotation (growth as a writer). After a student shared, the teachers asked the rest of the class what they thought: “Did you agree or disagree? What could we have done differently?” The class engaged in the same process for all annotations, ensuring that every student participated in the defense. The benefits of doing an oral defense included fostering reflective conversation among students and asking follow-up questions to better understand students’ learning.

1. Share your annotation (what you wrote on your sticky note).
2. Remind us of the evidence (what we wrote in our daybooks).
3. Remember to pretend that we know nothing about our class. What learning was taking place, and why did this daybook entry work for you? If you could modify this lesson in any way, what would you do?
4. Make sure you make a clear connection to the annotation that you are referring to. In other words, make sure to discuss your growth as a reader or writer.
5. Listeners, jot down something you heard that reveals a new perspective, raises a question, and/or connects with your own annotation. Be ready to share at the appropriate time.
6. This is a time of reflection. Don’t be afraid to talk about your strengths and your challenges. The point of this discussion is to see how you’ve grown as a reader and writer and how we might work together to help you grow even more during the next unit.

**Figure 2.** Reflective Conversation Guidelines

After the oral defense, students turned in their daybooks. They were graded on the written annotations and oral responses. Students were expected to write and share clear and insightful responses. To ensure that students understood what *clear and insightful* meant, Adrienne and Coley reviewed example responses written by students in the past. The teachers used the following two questions to grade the reflective responses:

1. Do you need more details to understand the meaning of the response? If so, what could be added?
2. In what ways does the writer make a connection to his or her growth as a reader or writer?

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

To learn more about how the daybook defense shaped the identity work of students, we examined the following sources of data: 48 student daybooks, two audio and video recorded daybook defenses of 60 minutes each, and field notes from the two observed daybook defenses. During those observations, we noted when students reflected about themselves as readers/writers. We made copies of the daybooks from Adrienne’s and Coley’s classes and focused on the five marked entries for the daybook defense (240 entries). We transcribed the two video recorded defenses and added any missing details about reflection and identity work to our field notes after reviewing them.

To help us learn more about how reflection in the daybook defenses shaped students' literacy identity work, we engaged in qualitative analysis of all data to code for moments when students reflected about their identities as readers and writers during this specific literacy practice. Of the 240 marked entries in the 48 notebooks, 215 entries showed evidence of reflection about students' reader/writer identities (e.g., dialogue about how and why they read and write). Due to the nature of the exercise, most student talk (90%) during the defense illustrated reflective talk related to either reader and/or writer identities. To identify instances when students reflected about their identities as readers/writers, we first found moments of talk in the video/audio transcripts and then searched the daybook entries cited during that talk that reflected that work. From that analysis, two categories emerged: articulating behaviors of reader/writer identities and expressing beliefs about reader/writer identities.

Some themes were more prevalent than others, as described in the findings. For the sake of space, we chose a few examples to illustrate the described categories. Specifically, we chose excerpts from transcripts that represented the various ways in which students used reflection to situate themselves as readers/writers during the daybook defense in both classrooms. Although Adrienne and Coley were not part of the entire analytic process, we sent them memos and drafts of written analysis to read and review. Based on their reviews, we made minor changes, such as in the description of how they facilitated daybook defenses.

## **Identity Work During a Daybook Defense**

In this section, we discuss how reflective talk in the daybook defense fostered the identity work of readers and writers through the two interrelated categories: articulating behaviors of reader/writer identities and expressing beliefs about reader/writer identities.

### **Articulating Behaviors of Reader/Writer Identities**

One way that students engaged in the identity work of readers/writers was by articulating the behaviors of reader/writer identities. When students articulated specific behaviors of a reader or writer, such as highlighting significant quotes from a novel and/or revising drafts, they described their storyline of what it meant to be a reader and/or writer. We noted that a combined total of 182 of the 240 annotations and 42 responses during the daybook defense reflected this theme. In an example from the oral defenses in Coley's class, Stephanie shared an annotation related to how she had revised a story during a Friday freewrite:

It was the one with the picture of the girl and the dark kind of scary train, you know?...See what I did was I saw the picture and I started the story. Then I looked at the picture and I was like, no no no, I've got to start over again. So I marked it out and I rewrote a story. So that just shows that I personally can see a picture and like think of a story immediately and go back, relook at the picture, and come up with something completely different. So I guess a second look always helps.

In this example, Stephanie engaged in the identity work of a writer by describing a specific writing behavior: how a writer rewrites. She articulated her writing process that had occurred at a

particular moment in time and also named what she had done in a more general way (i.e., “a second look”). She characterized herself as someone who is both innovative with (“I personally can...come up with something completely different”) and flexible about (“I marked it out and I rewrote”) ideas. Stephanie implied that this exercise helped her understand that her first attempt at writing might not be her best, perhaps something that she had not realized before (“So I guess a second look always helps”). Thus, she was able to articulate specific writing behaviors that she found useful. This is a helpful discussion because it allowed Stephanie to reflect on how she had enacted a writer identity at that moment, perhaps influencing future positionings. The opportunity to articulate such behaviors allows young writers to figure out the kind of writer they need to be at specific times, such as a collaborative writer or a brainstormer. In addition, Stephanie verbalized a storyline for what it meant to be a writer from her experience.

In an example from Adrienne’s room, Bailey reflected that a rereading activity helped her better understand how to analyze a text. While reading *Night* by Elie Wiesel, Bailey looked at quotes from other authors where the word *night* represented something larger than a literal night. She analyzed those quotes and then found Wiesel's own use of the word to compare the connotations of it. About the assignment, she said,

This activity was probably my favorite because it actually made me think. When I first got the quote, I had absolutely no clue what it was trying to say and was about to just jot something down but then I read it a few more times and it finally clicked. I was really happy when I got the jist of what he was thinking and what everything in the quote symbolized. This activity taught me how to better analyze.

In this example, Bailey explored her identities as a reader by discussing how analysis had helped her think about and understand what she read. She articulated the specific behaviors that had helped her with the analysis. First, she noted that she had resisted her initial reaction to write a surface-level response because she had “no clue” about the meaning of the quote. Second, she explained that she had read the quote “a few more times,” which helped her understand the text at a deeper level (“what everything in the quote symbolized”). By articulating these behaviors, Bailey had the chance to make sense of what it meant to be a reader for her in the classroom.

In an example in Coley’s room, Taylor discussed how a reader response about Wiesel's *Night* in her daybook helped her step into the shoes of the character:

This was an entry when we had to put ourselves in the shoes of the writer and write a journal entry. It shows me as a reader, because I had to take in all of the information we got from him and figuratively become him. We had to figure out what his goal would be in a situation and that all comes from the connection we made from him as a reader.

Taylor's reflective statement illustrated her identity work as a reader by articulating how she had enacted a reader identity: Connect with a character. Specifically, she described specific behaviors (“take in all of the information...and figuratively become him”) that had helped her make connections to the text. Through these explicit statements, Taylor discussed how reading worked for her, thus verbalizing a storyline for her and her classmates about reading processes.

## Expressing Beliefs About Reader/Writer Identities

Identity work also occurred when students expressed specific beliefs about reader/writer identities. We made note of this theme when a student stated what a reader/writer is or what reading/writing meant to them (e.g., “Reading/writing should be...”; “A reader/writer is...”). A combined total of 120 of the 240 annotations and 22 responses during the daybook defense reflected this theme. To illustrate that concept, Kyle, in Coley’s classroom, stated that writing a narrative about his future after reading Sandra Cisneros’s *The House on Mango Street* had helped him think about how he defines a writer identity:

This entry was about how I hope my friends will remember me when we all go to college and stuff...I used this one as a writer because I had no problem just letting it flow out. I think writing should be something that flows onto paper and connects with the person and topic. And I believe that I share that here.

For Kyle, the oral defense gave him the opportunity to discuss his beliefs about being a writer (e.g., “writing should be something that flows onto paper”). Talking about his personal beliefs about writing illustrated how this assignment had provided the occasion for him to both construct and enact his writer identities on his own terms. In addition, he had added to his storyline of what it means to be a writer (“connects with the person and topic”).

In an example in Coley’s class about *The House on Mango Street*, Jessie reflected on his belief that a reader is someone who reads to understand multiple perspectives. Specifically, this entry asked students what they would do if they were in similar situations as the character (i.e., living illegally in the United States):

I thought this entry made me think from a different perspective and helped me understand what Esperanza’s feelings were and the feelings of the other characters. And I felt like that made me a better reader because I could connect to the book more and understand how they felt.

Here, Jessie stated that this entry had helped him become “a better reader” by asking him to make connections to the book in relation to the perspective of a character. By using the phrase *better reader*, we understand that Jessie had expressed his belief that a reader makes connections, specifically in relation to the experiences of the characters. Talking about his personal beliefs about reading provided the occasion for him to make sense of what a reader means to him based on specific experiences.

In Adrienne’s classroom, Shana described two entries that illustrated her beliefs about being a reader:

The quote about Siddhartha realizing the world around him, when before he was so focused on himself and peace, showed me as a reader because it reminds me to look around—to not just focus on what I have to do and needs to be done. And that connected with another entry where I wrote about how reading is powerful and that when people read they are experiencing something amazing that will influence their lives forever.

In this entry, Shana first described how a response to a quote from Herman Hesse's *Siddhartha* had made her think more about how to live her own life (e.g., “reminds me to look around”). She then connected that entry to another reflection about how readers are influenced to live their lives in new ways from what they read. Thus, Shana expressed her belief that reading can make a “powerful” impact on people's “lives forever.” By expressing such beliefs, she had the chance to define what a reader is for her, and she opened up possibilities for her classmates to make similar reflections.

## **Final Thoughts**

Hall (2012) stated that rewriting identities is about opening space for students to find personal meaning and relevance in the reading/writing process. This requires pushing back against tendencies to classify students as good readers/writers based on narrow notions. Findings from this study contribute to literature about identity work (Broughton & Fairbanks, 2003; Hall, 2012) by illustrating how teachers and students explored identities through reflection in writing notebooks. Specifically, this work highlights how reflection through the daybook defense opened opportunities for students to articulate behaviors of reader/writer identities and express beliefs related to those identities. Rather than being evaluated by a teacher about the right or wrong way to be a reader or writer, students were able to narrate their identity processes in their own words. This is important because students have the opportunity through daybook defense to actively develop meaning for their literacy learning.

Such reflections revealed some of the storylines that students believed to be true about the behaviors required to be a reader and writer in the world. Through those reflective conversations, students focused on moments of growth rather than a fixed identity. As examples, Stephanie discussed her rewrite process as a writer, and Jessie explained how reading influences her life. Other students articulated storylines (e.g., rewriting is part of writing) and pinpointed moments of agency (e.g., “made me a better reader”) that might lead to more consistent positionings. By doing this orally, students provided a road map for others in the classroom for what it means to take on reader/writer positions (e.g., Kyle's belief that writing should connect to people and a topic). Thus, this research contributes to scholarship arguing for reflection (Schön, 1983) that potentially opens a space for students to make sense of identities (Holland et al., 1998).

To open up similar classroom conversations, educators can ask students to complete the following sentence in their daybooks: “A reader/writer is \_\_\_\_.” From their answers, the whole class can brainstorm specific behaviors and beliefs of readers/writers (e.g., readers underline short pieces of text that are meaningful to them; writers gather ideas about writing by reading mentor texts) in an attempt to create a road map for the literacy community in the classroom. This can be done on a visual showcased on the wall of the classroom. To help students critically examine that road map throughout the semester/year, the class can return to it every six to eight weeks to review what has been productive so far and add any other actions that might prove to be helpful.

We see the practical value in discussing how one literay practice promoted identity work in a classroom. Such a narrow focus, however, limited the degree to which students' complex literacy

identities were revealed in the data. We learned that students had the opportunity to define what *reader* or *writer* meant to them and to articulate their affinities toward particular school-based literacy practices, which we believe is an important and often ignored aspect of identity work in a literacy classroom.

Future research, however, should focus on students' identity work over time to illustrate the dynamic and intersectional nature of reader and writer identities in a classroom. For example, research is needed on how teachers might mediate this often personal work without silencing students' sensitive developing identity work. One way for both teachers and students to become more comfortable with this reflective work is to open multiple opportunities across time. For example, Adrienne's school passed the daybook activity on from teacher to teacher. Although each teacher used daybooks in a different way, depending on personal teaching style, they were a central tool for students' reader/writer identity work for four years. Such a practice had the potential to foster more opportunities for habitual positionings year after year.

Overall, students in this study verbalized how they authored themselves as readers/writers during this dialogue. As a result, both Coley and Adrienne learned more about the kinds of assignments that opened opportunities for students to construct and enact those identities in the classroom. Specifically, this interactive narrative of students' progress in the class made their thinking visible not only for themselves but also for the teacher. For Adrienne, she learned that asking Bailey to analyze a quote helped her situate herself as a reader who is able to engage in analysis to better comprehend literature. For Coley, the oral defense validated that providing opportunities for students to write in ways that connect with a person and topic is important for the writer identity work of students.

With that said, we recognize that the same opportunities that fostered identity work with most students in this study can potentially hinder other students' identity work. For example, most students might benefit from Friday freewrites because they allow for less structured writing activities; however, other students may thrive with a more guided approach to writing. Thus, teachers promoting identity work for multiple learners through reflections in daybooks will benefit from engaging students in various ways of reading and writing, so all students can be active participants in the literacy classroom.

### **Take Action!**

1. Ask students to specify how they have grown as a reader and writer. By doing this, educators give students the chance to make sense of their own reading and writing processes over time and focus on their progress rather than failures.
2. Ask students to relate that growth to a piece of evidence from their daybooks. In doing this, students are expected to talk about a specific event related to their reader/writer identities rather than talk about that identity work in a more abstract way.
3. Prepare students for a classroom discussion that involves identity work by creating discussion expectations (i.e., actively listen, build on each other's comments, share multiple perspectives, ask clarifying questions).

4. Be prepared to listen to students and respond without evaluation. This reflection is more about how they are making sense of themselves as readers and writers rather than whether they are mastering specific reading and writing skills.
5. Close up the reflective conversation by asking students if they think the class has grown as readers and writers. If so, how?

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